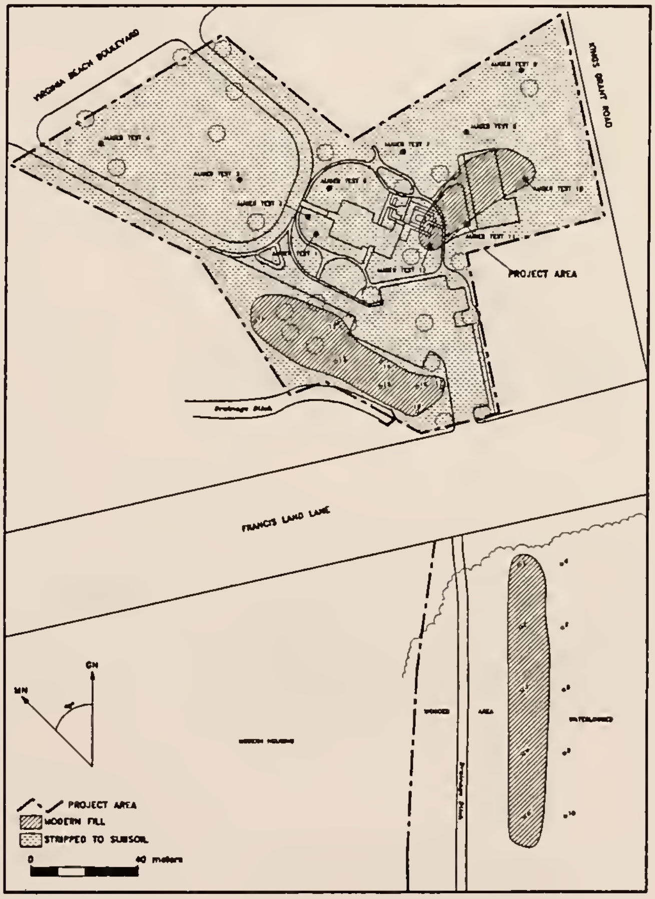
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF THE
FRANCIS LAND HOUSE PROPERTY
CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA



Prepared for
Department of Museums, Francis Land House

September 1997

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF THE
FRANCIS LAND HOUSE PROPERTY
CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

Submitted to:
Department of Museums
Francis Land House
3131 Virginia Beach Boulevard
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452

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September 19, 1997

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research conducted an archaeological assessment of the Francis Land House property in the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia, from July 28 through August 1, 1997. The purpose of this assessment was to provide information regarding the nature and distribution of archaeological resources within the project area. The assessment covered approximately 7 acres.

Archaeological testing demonstrated that extensive subsurface disturbances have occurred on the property due to its continuous occupation and that these disruptions have greatly reduced the property's archaeological potential. Shovel and auger testing yielded no evidence of undisturbed soils in which subsurface archaeological resources would be located. No archaeological remains were identified during the assessment. **Therefore, no further work is recommended at this time.**

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CHAPTER 1:
Project Background

Introduction

From July 28th through August 1, 1997, the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) conducted an archaeological assessment of the Francis Land House property in the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia (Figure 1). The investigation was intended to provide specific information concerning the nature and distribution of potential archaeological resources within the property. The work was conducted at the request of the Francis Land House Museum administrators in order to identify and evaluate potential archaeological resources located on the grounds for interpretation purposes and for planning information for future development.

The investigation was carried out under the general supervision of WMCAR Co-Directors Dennis B. Blanton and Dr. Donald W. Linebaugh. Mary H. Derbish was responsible for historical research, supervision of the archaeological fieldwork, and report preparation. Ms. Derbish was assisted in the field by Eleanor Breen and Adrienne Vaughn. Final illustrations for the report were prepared by John D. Roberts. All documentation related to this project is temporarily stored at the WMCAR in Williamsburg, Virginia, referenced under WMCAR project number 97-22.

Description of the Project Area

The Francis Land House is a gambrel-roof brick structure. The Land family arrived in the Virginia Beach area (called Lower Norfolk County in 1637) by the mid-1630s, and Francis Land patented 1,020 acres of land in the county in 1654. The construction date of the present house is unclear. The structure remained in the Land family until 1854, when it was purchased by a family named Petty. The City of Virginia Beach acquired the house and 35 acres in 1975 to save the structure from demolition. Much of this 35 acres has since been sold, leaving the house and approximately 7 acres of land (see Figure 1). The house is now operated by the City of Virginia Beach as a cultural and educational facility. The parcel is surrounded by urban development along Virginia Beach Boulevard.

The Francis Land House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The large eighteenth-century Georgian-style house is described in its National Register nomination form as a "five-bay, one-and-one-half-story, gambrel-roofed building set on a high basement. Its walls are of brick laid in Flemish bond with rubbed corbeled caps. All of the windows have been widened several inches. They and the dormers now have architrave frames and six-over-six sash. A modillion cornice, pedimented door hood, paneled shutters, and a Chinese balustrade on the early-twentieth-century stoop are all products of a recent restoration" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources [VDHR] site files).

Environmental Setting of the Project Area

The City of Virginia Beach lies within the Tidewater region of the Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic province (Hatch et al. 1985). The Coastal Plain province extends from the Atlantic Ocean west to the Fall Line and is characterized by low topographic relief consisting of broad, flat terraces and scarps. The province is divided into the Outer Coastal Plain and the Interior Coastal Plain. The Outer Coastal Plain, in which the project area is located, extends from the coast to the saltwater/freshwater transition zone further inland. The drainage pattern in the project area is poorly defined, with drainageways that are subject to wind and tides. The main drainage in the project area is the Pinetree Branch of the Lynnhaven River. The Lynnhaven River leads to a broad estuary on the south shore of the Chesapeake Bay, which meets the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Henry. Soils in the region belong to the Acredale-Tomotley-Nimmo association. Formed in marine and fluvial sediments, they consist of poorly drained soils that have a loamy subsoil (Hatch et al. 1985).

Floral and faunal resources in the area would have been an important element of both Native-American and Euro-American diets. Fruit- and nut-bearing species provided seasonal dietary supplements. Marshland floral species provided a habitat for exploitable faunal game as well as materials for building, firewood, fiber, and cordage. Fish resources would have been plentiful, and oysters and clams could be found on tidal flats and marshes. Shrimp and crab could also be collected from shallow waters. Mammals such as white-tailed deer, beaver, and rabbit were exploited for fur and food. Migratory fowl and the eggs of indigenous bird species served as food resources as well (McDonald et al. 1993:4–6).

The project area is divided between a landscaped lawn and home and a low-lying wooded area. Elevations range approximately from 10 to 15 ft. above mean sea level. The nearest water source is the Pinetree Branch of the Lynnhaven River, located approximately 700 ft. south of the Francis Land House. Pinetree Branch was likely navigable during historic times (Mark Reed, personal communication 1997). The project area soils are composed of Udorthents, which "consist of areas where the natural soil has been altered by excavation or covered by earthy fill material" (Hatch et al. 1985:67). These areas are well drained to moderately well drained, and slopes may be level, steep, or undulating. Excavated areas are often borrow pits from which sediment has been removed to be used for road or building foundations. The fill areas are defined as "sites where at least 20 inches (51 cm) of earthy fill material covers the natural soil or where borrow pits, dumps, natural drainageways, or low lying areas have been filled" (Hatch et al. 1985:67). Udorthents soils are extremely variable in color, texture, and stratigraphy and may also contain nonsoil inclusions. Soil types bordering the project area include Arcedale silt loam, Nawney silt loam, and Chapanoke silt loam.

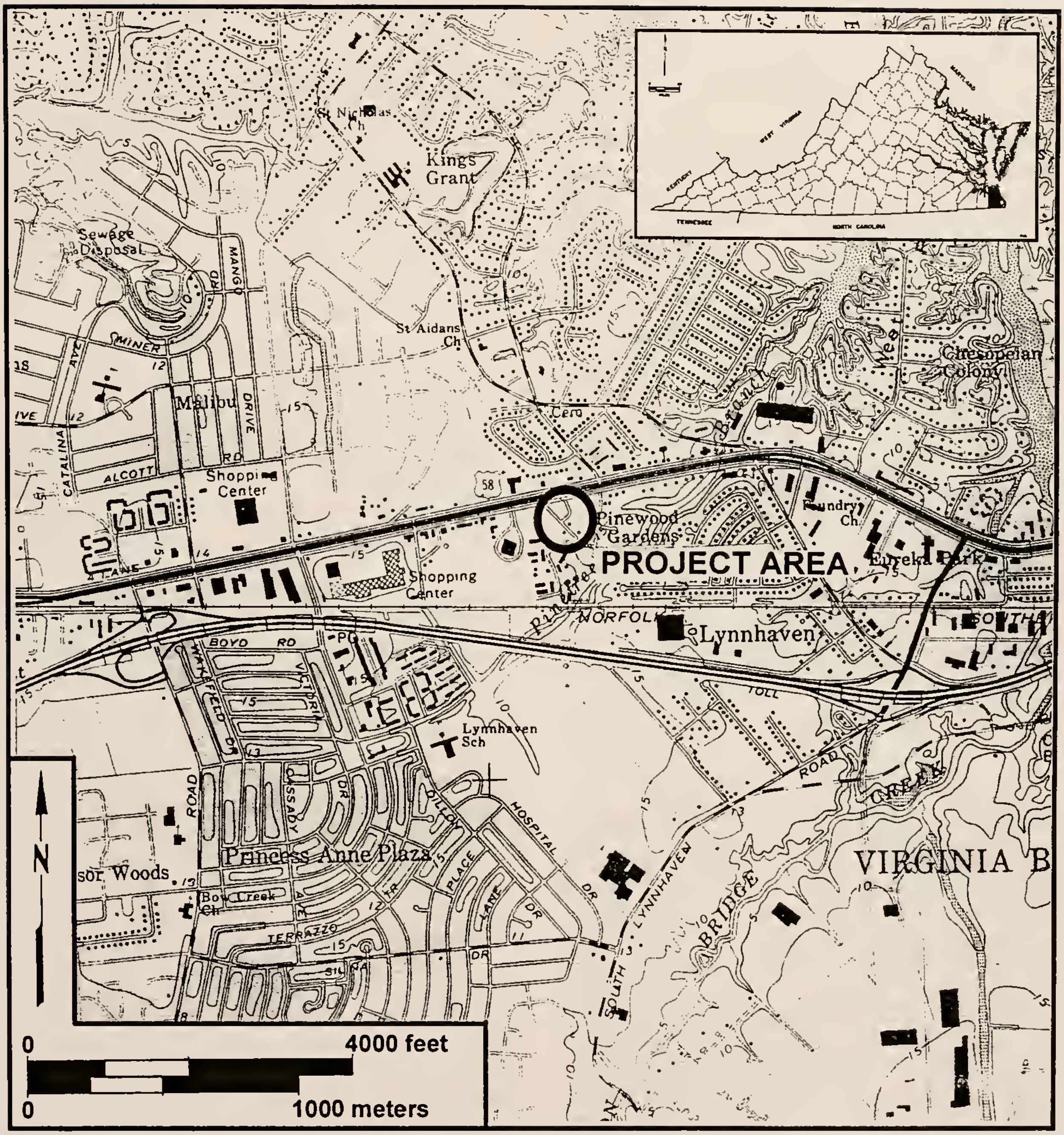


Figure 1. Site 44VB94, location within Virginia and topography of environs (U.S. Geological Survey 1986).

CHAPTER 2:
Previous Research and Cultural Context

This chapter provides a summary of current knowledge about the prehistoric and historic cultural resources in the region that encompasses the project area. This includes a discussion of previously reported archaeological sites within 1 mi. of the project area, a brief overview of the prehistory and history of the region, and a model of general site distribution based on background research.

Previous Research on Archaeological Sites

Background research was conducted in the archaeological site files and report library at the VDHR. This search indicated that one previously known site had been identified within a 1-mi. radius of the project area. Site 44VB94 is the archaeological site designation for the Francis Land House recorded by Nick Luccketti in 1986. The site is described as an eighteenth-century Anglo-American domestic-remnant plantation.

Luccketti conducted a brief survey limited to areas of the property that were to be impacted by construction. He noted that the area around the house had been heavily disturbed by the waterproofing system, utility construction, and landscaping activities. The survey identified a well that was dated to the eighteenth century based on handmade brick and shell mortar. The well has an internal diameter of 3 ft. 4 in. The construction is unusual in that it has a stretcher-laid well ring as opposed to most colonial-period wells, which are constructed of triangular compass bricks. The well was open into the nineteenth or twentieth century. No historic-period material was recovered. The well was slightly damaged by the installation of a 6-in. iron pipe that runs beside it.

Cultural resource management reports on file at the VDHR library were reviewed to provide examples of archaeological work conducted around standing historic structures in the City of Virginia Beach. In the early 1970s, archaeological excavations were conducted in conjunction with the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities' restoration of the Wishart historic property in the Pembroke section of Virginia Beach. The home has been continuously occupied for three centuries (Fisher 1983). The date the house was built cannot be determined through documentary evidence; however, archaeological work and a dendrochronological analysis have dated the house to the beginning of the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Fisher 1983).

Due to the disturbed nature of the soil and the continuous occupation of the property, archaeological testing and excavations by Neil Frank yielded little evidence of subsurface archaeological resources. A large area excavated against the west building face did not uncover the remains of a porch or steps to the main entrance; however, a small patch of brick paving in this area suggested that a pathway once existed. The pathway was probably used for many years based on the modern debris present in the stratum directly above it. Brick paving found north-northeast of the main building was theorized to have been the flooring of a small dependency. Artifacts located in the stratum just above this feature were modern. The foundation of the basement was also investigated. The cellar walls were built inside the dwelling walls and did not support the building. This suggests that the cellar was built after the home (Frank n.d). One eighteenth-century ceramic sherd and a few nineteenth-century artifacts were recovered; however, the majority of the material was from the twentieth century. Frank concluded that "no evidence of an architectural nature was encountered in the existing strata to aid the present reconstruction project" (Frank n.d.:7).

In 1982, archaeological testing resumed at this site under its new name, the Lynnhaven House, in an attempt to locate former accessory buildings and evidence of the early historic occupation (Fisher 1983). Work consisted of excavating 44 2-×-2-ft. test units across the property, and 10 machine-cut trenches were dug to remove the plowzone in selected areas. In general, archaeological testing revealed that the grounds surrounding the Lynnhaven House had been disturbed and the archaeological integrity of subsurface features had been lost in many areas; however, two trash pits found near the kitchen area contained diagnostic artifacts indicating that deposition had occurred beginning around the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Two large postmolds were located spaced 10 ft. apart near the northwest corner of the house. The molds averaged 1 ft. in diameter and extended 2 ft. 5 in. below the surface. This is typical of a seventeenth-century post building. The fact that the postmolds are located directly in front of the home suggests that they are not from an outbuilding, but instead may have been part of a post building that was built before the standing brick structure. Testing was also conducted at a small cemetery on the property. The discovery of unmarked burials expanded the known dimensions of the cemetery. The burials "were placed in subterranean brick vaults, built so as to use an existing vault wall for the side of the additional crypt. Coffins do no appear to have been used for these vault burials" (Fisher 1983:iv–v). Fisher suggests that the burials date to the eighteenth century; however, a firm date was not established.

The area in which the caretaker's cottage at the Lynnhaven House was reconstructed was also surveyed in 1982. No significant archaeological deposits were located in the vicinity (Luccketti 1982).

In summary, archaeological work conducted at historic homes that have been continuously occupied has demonstrated that modifications made to the structure and surrounding grounds often resulted in extensive subsurface disturbances, and consequently a loss of archaeological integrity associated with the site.

Prehistory of the Project Area

Paleoindian Resources (ca. 12,000–8000 B.C.)

The peoples of the Paleoindian stage in Virginia have generally been characterized as selectively mobile populations, operating within a prescribed territory, but with an eventual return to a central base (Gardner 1977:261; Turner 1989:77). Based on the Flint Run Complex settlement system, their nomadism was not necessarily seasonally oriented but was to some degree tied to tool kit depletion and social factors. Studies of known Paleoindian sites, especially Flint Run and Williamson, and studies tracing specific cherts and jaspers to source locations have consistently documented a recurring emphasis on high-quality lithic sources and wide-ranging foraging, rather than collecting subsistence patterns. This suggests a settlement pattern of "tethered nomadism" (Custer and Wallace 1982:163; Turner 1989:82).

Approximately 20 Paleoindian sites had been documented in the VDHR files for the Coastal Plain of Virginia by 1984, and between 50 and 75 sites for all of Virginia by 1988 (Turner 1989:78). Nine fluted points, two definite Paleoindian sites, and two possible Paleoindian sites have been found in the City of Virginia Beach (*Archaeology of Eastern North America* 1982:36; McAvoy 1992; McCary 1983; Traver and Ralph 1989). This scarcity of Paleoindian sites may be linked to the lack of the high-quality lithic resources in the Outer Coastal Plain of Virginia.

Additional environmental evidence suggests that Paleoindian settlement in Virginia may be associated with the expanding oak-hickory forest and its ecotone with the boreal forest and hardwoods (Edwards and Merrill 1977:35–36; Turner 1989:79). Concentrations of Paleoindian projectile points in the southern Virginia counties of Mecklenburg and Dinwiddie, each with more than four times more than any other county, roughly correspond to the northern boundary of the oak-hickory forest around 9500–8000 B.C. Paleoindian peoples were able to utilize the floral and faunal resources of the oak-hickory forest, as well as the resource advantages of an ecotone. The eastern boundary of this forest at that time was the Great Dismal Swamp (Edwards and Merrill 1977). This area also would have provided easy foraging access to both oak-hickory forest and swamp resources. Rappleye and Gardner (1979) have identified Paleoindian sites immediately west of the swamp, along what is known as the Suffolk Scarp (Oaks and Whitehead 1979). During the Paleoindian stage, however, the forest did not extend east into the present project area (Edwards and Merrill 1977). Although the lack of an oak-hickory/boreal forest ecotone and the distribution of lithic resources did not preclude the use of the Outer Coastal Plain during the Paleoindian stage, it can explain the apparently very limited exploitation of the area during that stage. Consequently, expectations for the occurrence of Paleoindian sites within the project area are low.

Archaic Resources (8000–1100 B.C.)

Until about 7000 B.C., Archaic-stage settlement and subsistence patterns tend to display remarkable continuity with patterns of the Paleoindian stage (Custer 1990:34). Changes in the climate associated with the advent of an essentially modern Holocene environment and the contemporaneous overall rise in sea level due to glacial melting facilitated the continued development of the Great Dismal Swamp and the formation of freshwater marshes (Whitehead and Oaks 1979:37). The rise of freshwater marshes and expansion of the Great Dismal Swamp contributed to the change in subsistence focus to seasonal collecting and mobility patterns, and use of aquatic resources in the Coastal Plain. A shift also began toward the use of more readily available quartz and quartzite materials, with a decreasing dependence on chert and jasper (Hunter and Higgins 1985:9).

More specifically, Painter (1988:26) identifies two distinct Terminal Archaic cultures that could be present within the project area: Currituck and Dismal Swamp. The Currituck Culture inhabited the seacoast estuaries of southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. This culture exploited a variety of econiches in this region, relying mostly on shellfish, fish, amphibians, and waterfowl for their subsistence. Game animals and a wide variety of plant foods supplemented their diet. The Currituck peoples did not manufacture or utilize lithic projectile points but relied instead on points made of bone, antler, turkey spurs, stingray barbs, and sharks' teeth. They may have been the first inhabitants of the region to use pottery. Poorly fired shell-tempered sherds dating to 1500 B.C. have been found associated with this culture. The Currituck peoples lived in organized villages and exhibited developed trash disposal and burial practices.

The Dismal Swamp Culture inhabited the fringes of the swamp proper and the areas along its associated waterways. These peoples exploited the upland forest, smaller inland rivers and bordering swamps, and the Dismal Swamp and its associated forests and savannahs. Their diet consisted of a variety of game animals, fish, amphibians, waterfowl, and tubers, nuts, and berries (Painter 1988:30).

The primary location within the project area likely to contain Archaic sites is the margin area of the Pinetree Branch of the Lynnhaven River. Expectations for the occurrence of Archaic sites in the project area primarily focus on small, subsistence-related, limited-activity sites as well as some relatively more permanent base camps in areas of higher elevation. However, due to the low elevation and disturbed nature of the soils in this area, there is a low probability for the occurrence of Archaic sites.

Woodland Resources (ca. 1100 B.C.–A.D. 1607)

In general, the Woodland stage has been defined as beginning with the introduction of pottery into the region, perhaps as early as 1100 B.C. (Gardner 1982). This stage can also be characterized by increasing numbers of small permanent or semipermanent settlements. Factors instrumental in the increase in sedentism probably have their roots in the Archaic stage and the changing Holocene environment. They include increased efficiency and focus on exploiting localized resources, and the development of social institutions that encouraged the production of surplus goods. These factors, combined with a favorable habitat, the growth of storage technology, and the establishment of exploitative camps that allowed for the expansion of the local resource base, would have been adequate for the use of a sedentary lifestyle (Gardner 1982:56). By the Late Woodland period, populations developed a subsistence strategy based on the cultivation of beans, corn, squash, and tobacco (Gardner 1982). Settlement size varied from large villages to smaller hamlets, and the location of fertile soils became an increasingly important factor in settlement location.

The low topographic relief in the project area makes the probability of large Woodland villages low; however, Woodland villages such as the Great Neck Site have been identified in Virginia Beach at elevations around mean sea level. Smaller procurement and seasonal camps could be found along the Pinetree Branch of the Lynnhaven River in the wooded portion of the project area; however, the disturbed nature of the soils reduces this possibility.

Historical Background of the Project Area

This section provides a basic historical framework for the current report. Themes relevant to the present study, especially settlement patterns, are discussed.

Settlement to Society (1607–1750)

European explorers, such as Amadas and Barlowe from the Roanoke Colony expeditions, had already determined the general nature of the project area vicinity during the last half of the sixteenth century. It was Capt. Christopher Newport, however, who first explored the project area in 1607 (Hulton 1972 cited in Traver and Ralph 1989:I-24). Initial settlement by the British occurred between the years 1617 and 1619. When these Europeans arrived, there were numerous Native-American settlements in the region. Few accounts remain that document the relationships between the settlers and the natives, most of whom belonged to the Chesopiean Culture; however, records from the House of Burgesses in 1662 suggest that the groups were friendly and that the few natives who owned firearms were allowed to use them (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-27; Turner 1984:129).

"The 'faire lande' described by the explorers of 1607 soon attracted others, and the wilderness quickly gave way to agricultural and shipping activities. The influx of ships and the landing of immigrants all contributed to the business and social development of the region" (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-27). Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, agriculture dominated the economy of the project area. Tobacco quickly emerged as the dominant crop; in fact, "between 1666 and 1667 tobacco over-production was so great that the legislature suspended planting" (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-29). By law, tobacco had to be shipped from a designated port. Norfolk became the first such shipping point, and huge tobacco warehouses were established there as well as in Portsmouth and Great Bridge (Pullins et al. 1991).

In 1634, the project area was contained within Elizabeth City County. New Norfolk County split from Elizabeth City County in 1636, and in 1637 New Norfolk was itself divided into Lower Norfolk and Upper Norfolk counties. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, increasing numbers of settlers forced yet another redefinition of the county boundaries, and in 1691 the division of Lower Norfolk County created Princess Anne and Norfolk counties (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-25). The last incorporation to affect the project area occurred in 1963, when the City of Virginia Beach was formed from a merger of Princess Anne County and the town of Virginia Beach. Despite the influx of settlers, many areas remained marginal and relatively uninhabited due to the unhealthy and inhospitable conditions of the low and swampy areas (Traver and Ralph 1989). "By the end of the seventeenth century about 22 plantation settlements were already established, spaced far apart on the rivers and streams" (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-27).

Colony to Nation (1750–1789)

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the project area, like most parts of the Tidewater region, had generated a network of governmental, educational, and religious institutions. Because of the rural nature of the area, both the landed and landless often depended on churches to provide a center for social activities (Traver and Ralph 1989). These were often supported by philanthropists, who upon making their fortune bequeathed a parcel of land or sum of money in their wills to their construction and support (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-27). When Europeans first began to settle in the area, the Church of England was by law the established denomination for all British subjects. Parish boundaries often defined community orientations and social structures by imposing artificial groupings (Turner 1984:29). This was especially true in the project area because of the frequent realignment of political boundaries in the area. By the end of the seventeenth century, Anglicanism had begun to decline as several other denominations became established in Virginia. The first to gain a wide following in the area were the Methodists and Baptists, which remain dominant today.

In an economy dominated by agriculture, land is a crucial commodity. In 1782, 624 Princess Anne County residents owned land, including 69 who controlled tracts dominated by marshland (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-29). Three hundred thirty-eight of these landowners controlled 2,442 slaves (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-29). Norfolk County statistics for 1782 show 526 Caucasians and 542 African Americans residing within the county (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-29). Landowners in this area also frequently employed indentured servants in order to supplement slave labor in the fields and in the household. This practice, begun during the early settlement period, would begin to disappear before the Revolutionary War.

Princess Anne and Norfolk counties were the stage for a number of military engagements during the Revolutionary War. During the initial hostilities in October 1775, British troops were dispatched to Kempsville to destroy the firearms deposited there (Traver and Ralph 1989: I-31). In Princess Anne County on November 16, Lord Dunmore's troops surprised and defeated the local militia, which had been en route to join other colonial forces (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32). Lord Dunmore was not as successful 23 days later when he was soundly defeated by Virginia troops at Great Bridge on December 9, 1775. This loss led to the British evacuation of Norfolk in January 1776 and the subsequent bombardment that virtually destroyed the town (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32).

In 1779, the British returned and occupied Norfolk, Suffolk, and Gosport. "They burned Suffolk and destroyed about a hundred ships at the other two ports" (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32). In October 1780, Portsmouth suffered a similar fate, but the British quickly retreated as they were en route to ports farther south (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32). Two forts were built near Great Bridge after the 1775 battle. The first, Fort Murray, is shown north of the Elizabeth River on a 1779 map (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32). In 1781, a British fort was built by Gen. Benedict Arnold and his troops. It was abandoned, however, when Cornwallis ordered it evacuated to concentrate his forces at Yorktown (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32).

Early National Period (1789–1830)

While most of the area remained rural, several towns had been established by the late eighteenth century, often near streams and transportation routes. Many towns were not incorporated until the end of the nineteenth century (Traver and Ralph 1989). Several attempts were made to foster planned communities that would serve as governmental seats in centrally located sites during this period; however, none succeeded despite the continued growth in population. This growth stimulated the development of more diverse social and leisure opportunities for residents. One of the most popular of these during the early nineteenth century was horse racing. Since this time, horse raising and riding have continued to play an important role in the culture of the area (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-30).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the agricultural systems within the area began to change. Livestock production of both horses and cattle gained popularity, and crop choices were redefined. Tobacco production, although still important, was no longer a major focus for farmers, who slowly changed over to food crops. Wheat was especially popular during this time, and tidal grist mills began to appear throughout southeastern Virginia (Pullins et al. 1991:19).

Antebellum Period (1830–1860)

Although the region had continued to grow during the years following its initial settlement, the antebellum period heralded a time of unprecedented development. Agriculture began to diversify as corn, fruits, and vegetables became profitable commodities, and the number of dairy cattle in the region tripled between 1782 and 1859 (Traver and Ralph 1989). New roads were constructed, linking small communities and farmers to larger markets. Since overland routes were slow, especially those leading to the important port of Norfolk, canal routes were built and improved (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-42). When linked with existing waterways, canals provided direct water access to marketing centers. Railroads were also established during this time, the most important of which were the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad and the Norfolk and Southern Railroad (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-42). A number of communities were founded adjacent to important railroad stations.

Public schools within the project area did not become widespread until the mid-nineteenth century. Traditionally, families with the financial means often hired tutors for their children or sent them to private institutions. "After the revolution schools were established to provide a three year education for all free people" (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-31). While the system was slow to develop, many parents were regularly enrolling their children by the time of the Civil War (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-31).

Civil War (1861–1865)

No major military engagements occurred in the project area during the Civil War, primarily because it was occupied by Federal troops near the beginning of the conflict (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32). During the occupation, the Union army controlled the major roads and railroads, effectively isolating residents from much of the activity occurring elsewhere in the state. Although no battles were fought in the region, it was not protected from destruction, as Union troops destroyed homes, farms, schools, and churches (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32). The Civil War altered previous settlement and economic patterns by devastating the area and causing a post-war depression (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-32).

Reconstruction and Growth (1865–1914)

After the Civil War, the railroads that had entered the region shortly before the conflict continued to expand. They flourished through the impetus of increased commerce and agriculture within the region and a burgeoning population. As the need for better transportation to markets and seaports such as Norfolk increased, road construction also accelerated. All of this played an important role in the growth of truck farms in southeastern Virginia and the development of small communities along these routes (Traver and Ralph 1989).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, truck farming of fruits and vegetables became a major agricultural pursuit (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-30). Crops such as corn, used previously for local subsistence, were sold at roadside stands and produced for sale at grocery stores across the eastern half of the United States (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-30). Dairy farming also became more widespread. Both truck farming and dairying have continued into the twentieth century.

World War I to Present

Today many of the families living within the project area are descended from the original settlers. Some occupy family properties that were obtained through the original land grants (Traver and Ralph 1989:I-24). The economy is still partially based on agriculture, although commerce and industry have become increasingly important. The lumber business, which had its beginning in the eighteenth century, has continued to play an important role in the economy. Much of the timber for this enterprise is found in the surrounding marshlands

(Traver and Ralph 1989). The population of the area has continued to grow, and many residents now work in the industrial centers of Norfolk and Virginia Beach. This urbanization will no doubt have a significant impact on the region in years to come.

The Francis Land Family and Property

The following Land family background is summarized from the extensive documentary information gathered and written by the staff and volunteers at the Francis Land House.

The Francis Land family was prominent in the present-day Virginia Beach region from the second quarter of the seventeenth century until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Francis Land I arrived in Virginia from England by around the 1630s. Lower Norfolk County court records document his property holdings and refer to land transactions as early as 1638. Records also show that he was elected churchwarden of Lynnhaven Parish in 1647. In 1654, Land received a land patent for 1,020 acres. While most of the land had been previously acquired by him from other landowners in Lower Norfolk County, another 200 acres was granted to him under the headright system of land accumulation for his transportation of four individuals into the colony. The boundaries of this property are unknown.

Francis Land I married three times and had two sons, Renatus and Francis II, with his first wife. No will has been found from Francis Land I; however, a 1692 deed agreement between Francis Land II and his nephew Edward suggests that Francis Land I divided his land upon his death. The eldest son, Renatus, received 670 acres, and Francis II received 350 acres. The will had presumably established that, upon the death of one of his sons, the surviving sibling would acquire the rest of the estate. However, Renatus had repatented the entire 1,020 acres in his name in 1662. Thus, when he died, both his son, Edward Land, and his brother, Francis Land II, had legal claim to the estate. It was decided between the two that Edward would control the 670 acres first belonging to his father and Francis would retain his 350 acres.

While no will has been found for Francis Land II, a probate inventory was made in 1694. The inventory states that his estate was valued at £150. He owned four slaves at the time of his death. Numerous items of household furniture and agricultural tools were listed on the inventory. A large number of livestock was also present on the property.

Francis Land II had one son, Francis III, who would have inherited all of his father's land under the law of primo geneter. By the early eighteenth century, Francis Land III is described as a gentleman in the county court records, indicating the family's social status during this time. In 1720, he was appointed a justice of the Princess Anne County Court. He also served on the vestry of Lynnhaven Parish. He likely had an appointment in the militia because he is referred to as Captain Land in the records. Captain Land served as a court justice until his death in 1736, stepping down briefly in 1723 to serve as sheriff for a one-year period.

Court records show that the labor force on the plantation was growing during this time. In four instances, slaves were brought before the court by Captain Land to have their ages determined in accordance with the tithe system. Upon his death, Captain Land's property was divided equally between his wife, Margaret, and his son, Francis Thorowgood Land. He also had two daughters, Mary and Margaret. The probate inventory taken at the time of Captain Land's death lists luxury items such as silver spoons, books on divinity and law, and a large looking glass. A dairy outbuilding is also mentioned as existing on the property.

Francis Thorowgood Land eventually inherited his mother's portion of the property. He and his wife Elizabeth Mosely had two children, Elizabeth and Francis V, and maintained the family holdings in good condition during their lifetime. In 1761, the probate inventory conducted after Francis Thorowgood Land's death valued the estate at £1,717 10*s*. Agricultural equipment such as plows and harrows as well as grains such as oat, wheat, corn, and flax listed on the inventory indicate that tobacco crops had been replaced by the mid-eighteenth century. Building materials (e.g., 1,410 bricks and 1,250 boards) suggest the construction of a structure on the property. Twenty slaves are also listed on the probate inventory.

Although Elizabeth Moseley was still alive, Francis Thorowgood's children were legally considered to be orphans of the court upon their father's death. Elizabeth Mosely married William Haynes in 1762, and Haynes became the children's guardian, handling the estate accounts until Francis Land V turned 21 years old. The guardian accounts reported to the court document activities that were occurring at the plantation during this time. Events such as the hiring out of slaves, the renting of the plantation to generate income, and the purchasing of goods for the children are recorded. Payments for schooling and even entrance fees to local dances are included as well.

The death of Francis Thorowgood Land may also have disrupted lives of the members of the slave community on the plantation. Elizabeth Moseley would have received as a widow one-third of her husband's land, property, and slaves as her dower. The remaining two-thirds of the slave population were often hired out on an annual basis until the orphan came of age. This became a common occurrence in Virginia as available land became scarce in the region and the cotton industry created a need for an increased labor force in the South. A slave could be hired out to a different plantation each year, consequently disrupting family networks.

Francis Land V continued his family's prominent role within the community. In 1777, he became a justice of the Princess Anne County Court and was appointed to administer the Oath of Allegiance in the Blackwater Precinct of the county. He was appointed as a commissioner of the tax in 1778, and became a vestryman for Lynnhaven Parish in 1780.

Francis Land V died in 1785 leaving two orphans, Francis Mosely and Elizabeth. Their mother Mary served as their guardian until she married Thomas Keeling in 1792. Items such as clothing, jewelry, and schooling listed on Francis Moseley and Elizabeth's guardian accounts indicate the wealth of the family during this time. When Francis Land V died, his mother Elizabeth Haynes was still in possession of her one-third dower portion of her husband's estate. The large, extended family may have needed several dwellings on the plantation. A 1787 court record states that William Yates broke into both Mary Land's house and Elizabeth Haynes house. This suggests the possibility of multiple dwellings on the property.

Francis Moseley Land served as a member of the Grand Jury in 1808 and became a commissioner of the peace in 1819. After his death in 1819, the Land property was divided between his two daughters, Mary and Anne. Mary received the house and 300 acres, and Anne received the remaining 389 acres. Mary Land married John N. Walke sometime between 1825 and 1830. Anne Land married John Galt in 1833. They sold their property to John and Mary Walke in 1836. The property left the family in 1853 when Frank Walke, the son of John Walke, sold the house and property to John Petty. Walke did reserve the rights to the family burial ground.

From this point, the property switched ownership many times. Table 1 summarizes deed transfers from 1854 to the present.

Based on historical research and archaeological testing conducted at other historic home museums, the type of resources that could be expected to exist at a house site like Francis Land include features such as outbuilding foundations (kitchen, smokehouse, slave quarters, barn, dairy), wells, privies, trash pits, and landscape features such as gardens and planting beds. The archaeological excavation and study of these features can contribute to research issues and interpretation of the site to the public.

Date	Property Transaction
1854	J. Petty dies. Property (1,309 acres) sold to W. N. Gregory
1866	Property (1,309 acres) auctioned to L. D. Starke.
1866	L. D. Starke sells an undivided half interest in the property to C. W. Grandy.
1874	L. D. Starke and C. W. Grandy's executrix, A. D. Grandy, sell property (1,309 acres) to W. B. Sanderlin.
1877	W. B. Sanderlin sells property to L. Jackson. Property is divided.
1885	L. Jackson sells 460 acres to W. A. Jackson.
1886	W. A. Jackson sells 142 acres to J. Tyler.
1909	J. Tyler dies; his property is sold to T. B. Kight.
1912	T. B. Kight sells property to J. T. Sheets.
1923	J. T. Sheets deeds property (68 acres) to his wife.
1927	W. W. Sheets gives property to D. Sheets and J. H. DeFrees.
1933	D. Sheets sells the property (68 acres) to J. N. Morse.
1948	J. N. Morse sells the property to J. H. DeFrees.
1954	J. H. DeFrees sells the land to M. L. Studds. The property (the house and 35 acres) passes to her daughter who uses the house as a dress shop.
1975	City of Virginia Beach purchases the house and 35 acres of property. The acreage around the house is sold off; 7 acres remain.

Table 1. Francis Land House property ownership after 1854.

CHAPTER 3:
Archaeological Survey Methods, Results, and Recommendations

Survey Methods

A field survey was undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the property in light of the information gathered during the archival review. A grid system was established for horizontal control. The survey was originally to be accomplished by means of a pedestrian survey involving both surface examination and shovel testing of the property. While 100% of the property was to be inspected, shovel testing would be done in areas with slopes of 10% or less, at intervals of not more than 25 ft. in undisturbed yard areas (3.5 acres) and 75 ft. in the adjacent wooded parcel (3.5 acres). Paved portions of the property were not tested during this project. Waterlogged areas were also not tested. All surface exposures were examined carefully for cultural material, and where visibility exceeded 25% only judgmentally placed shovel tests were to be excavated. The soil from each unit was screened through 0.25-in. mesh to ensure the adequate recovery of artifacts. Representative soil profiles were to be recorded on standardized forms using U.S. Department of Agriculture and Munsell color descriptive terminology for all positive shovel tests (Kollmorgen Instruments Corporation 1990). A maximum of three 2.5-ft. test units were to be excavated in addition to shovel testing of the property. These areas were to be placed in areas of high artifact concentration or other indications of cultural features.

Due to the disturbed nature of the soils, the original project methodology was greatly altered and the entire project area was not surveyed. Fill was encountered in the limited shovel testing that was done at intervals of 25–50 ft. in the undisturbed yard area. In the adjacent wooded parcel, shovel tests also revealed fill or were waterlogged in the lower-lying areas. In order to better evaluate the project area, soil auger tests were placed judgmentally. These tests revealed that large portions of the property had been stripped to subsoil. No test units were excavated due to the site's lack of subsurface integrity.

Survey Results

Wooded Area: Shovel Testing

Ten shovel tests spaced 75 ft. apart were excavated in the wooded portion of the property (Figure 2). Shovel tests were dug to a depth of approximately 1.5–2 ft. This area is a combination of low-lying wetlands and more elevated sections; the latter have been identified as fill. In some areas, this fill can be over 15 ft. thick. Shovel tests placed in the lower-lying areas were waterlogged, while excavated material from higher elevations was determined to be fill. Fill sediment in this area consisted of a very dark brown (10YR2/2) loamy silt upper stratum approximately 0.2 ft. deep. Stratum II was a light olive brown (2.5YR5/4) sandy silt measuring 0.9 ft. thick. Stratum III consisted of gray (10YR5/1) silt. The soils were mottled and often contained modern glass and iron (Figure 3). There is a low probability that sites would be located within this area.

Francis Land House Yard: Shovel Testing

Due to the unfavorable conditions of the wooded tract, focus shifted to the areas closer to the Francis Land House. Shovel testing began on the southwest portion of the property adjacent to the parking lot (see Figure 2). Spaced at 25- to 50-ft. intervals, eight shovel tests were excavated to a depth of approximately 1.5 ft. to more than 2 ft. Modern fill was encountered in all tests. A typical profile included a dark grayish brown (10YR4/2) clay silt upper stratum, often mottled with olive brown (2.5YR4/3) sandy clay. The depth of this layer was variable, but usually measured 1–1.5 ft. deep. Beneath this stratum in some tests was a yellowish brown (10YR5/6) sand with gray (10YR5/1) and dark gray (10YR4/1) clay inclusions. Modern refuse and asphalt were found throughout these layers (Figure 4). The fill in this area is a result of construction activities relating to a large sewage line and drainage ditch that run along this portion of the property.

Francis Land House Yard: Auger Testing

Due to the amount of fill encountered in this area, and based on knowledge of past ground disturbances that have occurred on the property, it was decided to utilize a bucket auger to test areas around the house and better determine soil stratigraphy (see Figure 2). Twelve auger tests were placed judgmentally across the area. These tests revealed that cut-and-fill construction activity had stripped the top layers of sediment down to subsoil, and most likely this same material had been used as fill in

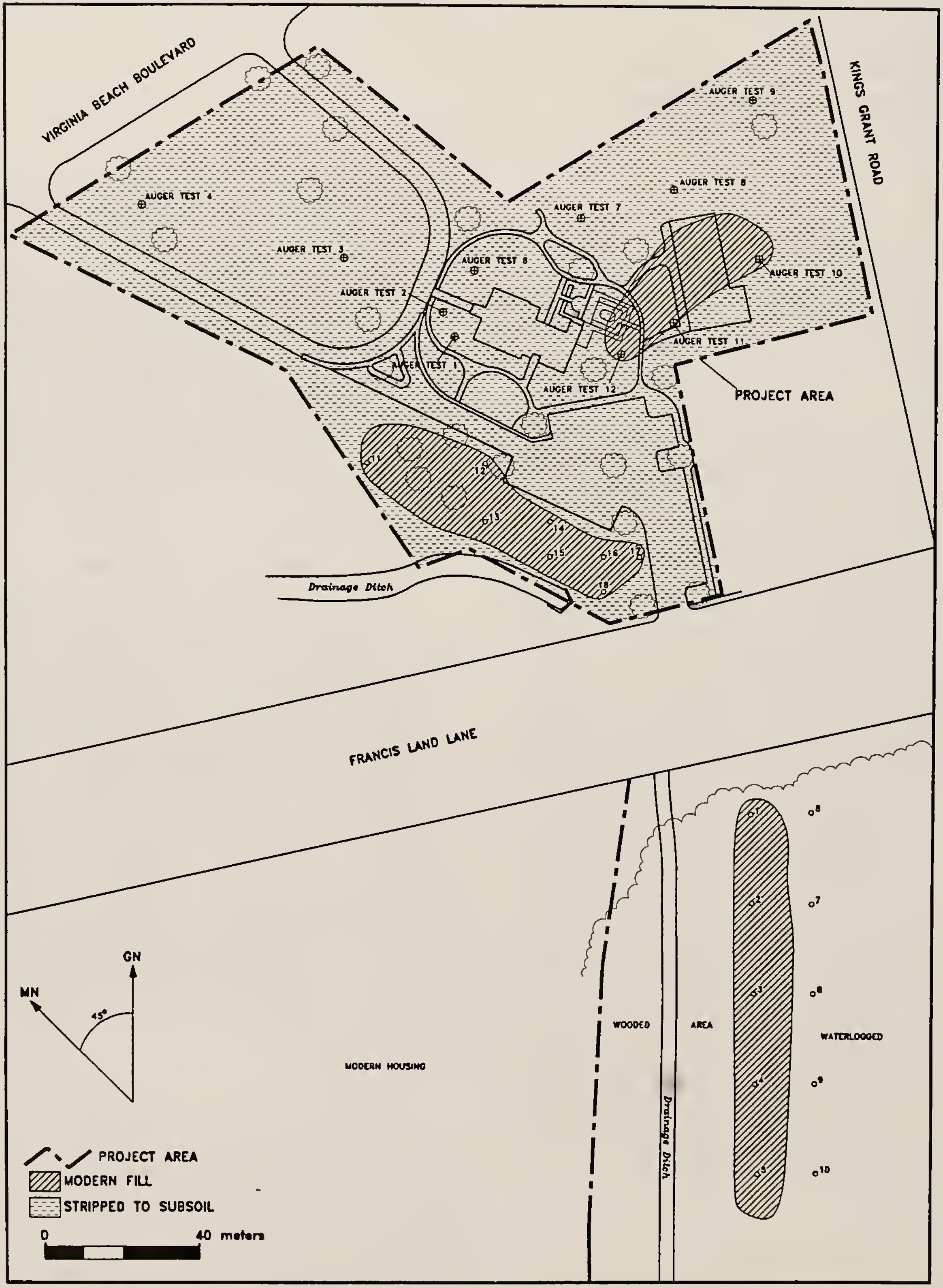
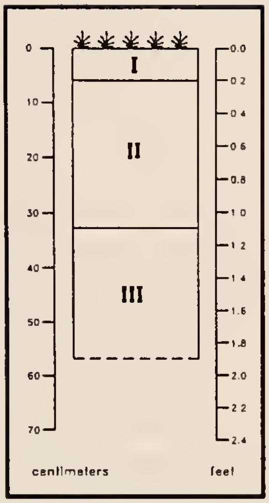


Figure 2. Site 44VB94, plan.



KEY

I - Very Dark Brown (10YR2/2) Loamy Silt
II - Light Olive Brown (2.5Y5/3) Sandy Silt
III - Dark Gray (10YR4/1) Silt

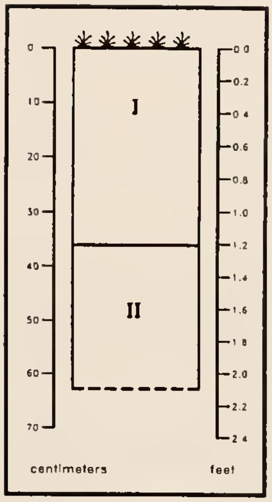
Figure 3. Site 44VB94, Shovel Test 4, profile.

other portions of the property. Auger tests that produced no modern refuse are believed to represent areas that have been stripped to the subsoil. Stratigraphy was very similar among the tests. A typical profile included an upper stratum of pale brown (10YR6/3) silty clay approximately 2.9 ft. deep. Stratum II was a light gray (10YR7/2) silty clay measuring approximately 2.7 ft. thick. Stratum III, a light yellowish brown (2.5YR6/4) sand, comprised the last 1.4 ft. of the 6.6-ft.-deep test hole (see Figure 5). In other auger tests, these soils were intermixed with modern refuse and asphalt inclusions. In conclusion, the archaeological testing described above did not locate areas of undisturbed soil.

Also attesting to the disturbed nature of the soil, no historic-period artifacts have been recovered from the vegetable or flax gardens located southeast of the house; however, large pieces of asphalt and brick have been encountered from 2 to 3 ft. below the surface.

Survey Effectiveness and Limitations

The primary purpose of this archaeological assessment was to provide the management of the Francis Land House with a preliminary statement of the nature and distribution of archaeological resources within the property associated with the historic house. The effectiveness of any such survey is contingent on and limited by the methods, techniques, and theories employed. Shovel testing provides a preliminary assessment of subsurface conditions. While shovel testing provides a representative sample of artifacts and features, it cannot be relied upon to recover all such materials. In order to maximize artifact recovery and provide a means of control for the biases inherent in shovel testing, the sediment from each shovel test was screened through 0.25-in. mesh. It is believed that this survey has satisfied its intended goals and the results accurately portray the archaeological character of the project area.

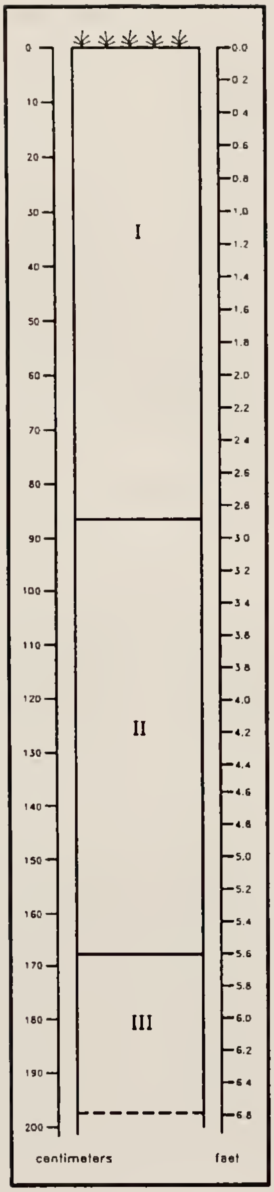


KEY

I - Dark Grayish Brown (10YR4/2) Clayey Silt
Mottled with Olive Brown (2.5YR4/3) Sandy Clay (Fill)
II - Yellowish Brown (10YR5/6) Sand with
Dark Gray (10YR4/1) Clay Inclusions (Fill)

Figure 4. Site 44VB94, Shovel Test 13, profile.

A number of factors have limited the archaeological potential of the project area. Large portions of the property have been plowed as late as the twentieth century, thus altering the stratigraphy. The construction of an extension built behind the house (and subsequently torn down during the restoration process) may also have created ground disturbances. An underground petroleum tank now filled with concrete is also buried approximately 5 ft. from the west side of the house. A modern drainage and waterproofing system was installed around the house, erasing the possibility of subsurface integrity in the immediate vicinity of the structure. An



KEY

I - Pale Brown (10YR6/3) Silty Clay (Fill)
II - Light Gray (10YR7/2) Silty Clay (Fill)
III - Light Yellowish Brown (2.5Y6/4) Sand (Fill?)

Figure 5. Site 44VB94, Auger Test 5, profile.

archaeological investigation preformed prior to these activities might have aided in dating the construction of the dwelling from artifacts contained in a builders trench, if present.

Other widespread ground disturbances that have occurred on the property include numerous underground utility and sewage lines, as well as a drainage ditch. The house is on Virginia Beach Boulevard, and the road's construction most likely disturbed portions of the front lawn area. Also, many disturbances occurred during the restoration of the structure and the construction of the large parking lot during the 1970s. Photographs taken during this time show evidence of stripping, and it is likely that cut-and-fill construction practices occurred at this time. Landscaping activities such as the planting of trees and the leveling out and resodding of the lawn also contributed to diminishing the subsurface integrity of the area.

Summary and Recommendations

During the archaeological assessment of the Francis Land House property, a total of 18 shovel tests and 12 auger tests were excavated. Of these, no tests were positive, and no undisturbed subsurface deposits were located.

The archaeological investigation at the Francis Land House property has revealed that massive subsurface disturbances have occurred and that archaeological material and features that may have at one time existed have been destroyed. It should also be noted that the Land family property was large, expanding to 1,020 acres in 1654. When it was sold in 1853, it still comprised over 300 acres. It is possible that earlier houses and related outbuildings once existed outside the present 7-acre project area. Unfortunately, the earliest property boundaries cannot be determined through historical documents.

While the standing historic house retains many of its original historic features, the long occupation of the dwelling has resulted in the continuous modification and disruption of the surrounding grounds. **While it is always advisable to consult with qualified archaeologists before more construction begins on this property, no further work is recommended at this time.**

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